

**POKER-TYPE GAME HAVING ADJUSTABLE
PAYOUTS AND METHOD THEREFOR**

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention:

This invention relates generally to poker-style games and methods, and more particularly to poker-style games and methods that provide opportunities for a player to make wagers on certain selected winning hands which will adjust the posted payout odds on the selected winning hand as well as other winning hands thereby increasing player excitement.

2. Description of the Prior Art:

The game of poker is widely played at peoples' homes and in a casino setting. At a casino, it is played both in a traditional format, with traditional playing cards, and in an electronic format. In the electronic version, typically known as "video poker", a player makes a wager, pushes a button to start the game, and is then presented with five cards shown on the video display. A player can choose to either keep the cards or discard a specified number of cards and receive replacement cards. Whether

or not the player's final hand qualifies for a payment is determined according to a pay table, which is generally displayed on the video poker machine itself.

5 The best hand that a player can achieve in classic five card poker of the type typically played on video poker machines is a royal flush. A royal flush consists of an Ace-high straight, where all of the cards have the same suit.

10 Many video poker players find that the basic video poker game has become somewhat stale and boring. In addition, many feel that the payouts associated with video poker are not high enough to make the game exciting. For instance, the chances of a player achieving a royal flush are generally about 1 in 35,000. However, since the player essentially wagers on all potential winning hands at once, the payout for a royal flush is typically no more than 800
15 credits or coins to every one credit or coin wagered. If the player were provided the opportunity to wager on any one selected hand(out of a large number of possible hands), in some instances, a player could stand to win at least one hundred times what the player would normally win by wagering in the typical manner and
20 achieving the same winning hand.

Furthermore, if a player is able to wager on a specific winning hand, then the posted payout odds on other winning hands should also be adjusted. For example, if a player places a wager on a royal flush, then the payouts associated with other winning
25 hands (i.e., straight, flush, 4 of a kind, etc) should also

increase. The reason for this is that a player's strategy has a large effect on obtaining the specific winning hand. Thus, in the above example, if a player wagers heavily on a royal flush, the player will most likely play the optimum strategy for achieving a royal flush. As a result, the probability of the player achieving other winning hands (i.e., straight, flush, 4 of a kind, etc) will decrease. Thus the posted payout odds for the other winning hands should increase to encourage the player to wager on other hands as well..

Therefore a need existed to provide a video poker-style game and method that substantially increases payouts by providing additional wagering opportunities for the player to wager on selected winning hands. A need further existed to provide the highest possible payouts for the additional wagering opportunities by adjusting the posted payout odds based on the player's wager, or by restricting the player's wagering options.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, it is an object of the present invention to provide a video poker-style game and method that substantially increases payouts by providing additional wagering opportunities for the player to wager on selected winning hands.

It is another object of the present invention to provide the highest possible payouts for the additional wagering opportunities by adjusting the posted payout odds based on the player's wager, or by restricting the player's wagering options.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, a method of playing a poker-style game comprising: making an opening wager by a player; permitting the player to make at least one wager to obtain at least one certain selected winning hand; adjusting payout odds on winning hands based on an amount of the opening wager and the at least one wager to obtain at least one certain selected winning hand; dealing a hand of cards to the player; allowing the player to hold desired cards of the hand; dealing replacement cards to the player; determining if a new hand of cards is a winning hand; and paying the player based on the adjusted payout odds.

In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a video poker-style game is disclosed. The video poker-style game has a video display adapted to display to a player a hand of cards for a poker-style game; means for permitting the player to make an opening wager by the player; means for permitting the player to make at least one wager to obtain at least one certain selected winning hand; means for permitting the player to hold a desired number of the hand of cards; means for permitting

the player to receive replacement cards; means for displaying a payout table associated with probabilities of obtaining the at least one selected winning hand of said game; means for displaying the payout associated with each said at least one wager; means for
5 determining if a winning hand has been achieved; and means for paying the player in accordance with the payout table.

The foregoing and other objects, features, and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following, more particular, description of the preferred embodiments of the
10 invention, as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention
15 itself, as well as a preferred mode of use, and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of illustrated embodiments when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

Figure 1 is a elevated front view of a video poker
20 machine or terminal using the present invention.

Figure 2 is a flow chart depicting a number of methods of play consistent with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to Figure 1, a video poker machine terminal 10 is shown. Its main features include a video display 12, a plurality of hold buttons 14, a draw/deal button 16, at least one bet button 18, a pay table 20, and a coin output 22. The terminal 10 should also have a payment receiver (not shown), through which coins, cash, payment cards, paper credits or the like may be inserted for purposes of placing a wager.

Generally, in a prior art video poker game, play is initiated by the insertion of a payment into the payment receiver. A player will typically then depress the bet button 18 in order to receive a display of a hand of cards. (In some games, more than one bet button 18 is provided, with, for example, one bet button allowing a player to bet one amount, and another allowing a player to bet a larger or additional amount.) After a hand of cards is displayed in the video display 12, the player then decides which cards he/she wants to hold and which cards are to be discard. A player indicates a hold selection for each card that is to be held by depressing the hold button 14 located directly below a card 24 that is to be held. (If a player changes his or her mind, the hold button 14 can be depressed a second time to cancel the selection.)

Once the player completes his or her hold selections, the player will depress the draw/deal button 16 a second time. This will cause the non-held cards 24 to be replaced with new cards. If the player has a winning hand according to the pay table 20, a

payment is made and can either be paid through the coin output 22 or simply indicated on a portion of the video display 12 as credits to be paid later.

The present invention concerns both the video poker-style game using, for example, the video poker machine on terminal 10 of Figure 1, and the wagering options provided to the player both before play is initiated and during the game. Referring to Figure 2, a method of playing and wagering options of one embodiment of the game of the present invention is illustrated. The video display 12 will display a pay table which relates the payouts (as a ratio of the amount paid per unit bet) associated with wagers placed on certain selected winning hands. The following table shows a preferred pay table to be used with one embodiment of the game and method of the present invention. Changes in the various ratios can be made, as desired, in keeping with the concepts of this invention.

Table 1

Royal Flush	20,000 to 1
Straight Flush	5,000 to 1
Four of a Kind	300 to 1
Full House	60 to 1
Flush	60 to 1
Straight	60 to 1
Three of a Kind	8 to 1
Two Pair	3 to 1
Jacks or Better	2 to 1

The player will then wager on the certain selected winning hand or hands of his or her choice. This can be done in any desired form, including for example having a touch-sensitive region on, for example, the video display 12, or on the pay table 20 so that the player can touch the different section or sections of the pay table 20 to select the winning hand or hands on which he or she chooses to wager, as well as selecting how much to wager on each selected hand. Software in the terminal 10 is used to recognize that such wagers have been made and the amount of any payout due to the player depending on the amount wagered. As the player makes these wagers, for example, the video display 12 or the pay table 20 will display the potential payouts associated with each wager should the player obtain or achieve that certain selected winning hand. Play will then continue as described above in prior art games with the player receiving a hand of cards, deciding which cards to hold, and receiving replacements for the non-held cards. After play is completed, software in the terminal 10 will determine if a winning hand has been achieved (i.e. a pair of Jacks or better) and also if a wager was registered on the player obtaining the certain selected winning hand or hands that occurred. If such a wager was registered, a payment is made according to the payout odds in Table 1, or according to other pre-set payout odds acceptable to the casino and any applicable gaming authority.

Still referring to Figure 2, a method of play of another embodiment of the game of the present invention is illustrated. There is a concern that some casino operators might not want to provide the wagering option of the present invention unless the player has also wagered in the traditional manner of prior art games as described above. To address this, optionally, a player can be required to register such a traditional wager prior to receiving the wagering option of the present invention (to pre-select a winning hand or hands). That this step is optional is illustrated by dashed-lines for this portion of the flow chart of Figure 2.

Referring to Figure 3, another method of an embodiment of the game of the present invention is illustrated. This method is similar to that described above. A player will wager in the traditional manner of prior art games as described above. Once, the player makes the traditional wager, the player will receive the wagering option to pre-select a winning hand or hands. There will be certain restrictions on what a player may wager on selected winning hands. For example, a player will generally not be allowed to place credits on a selected winning hand without first placing a certain minimum traditional wager. Larger traditional wagers will allow more credits to be placed on a selected winning hand.

Other restrictions may include, only allowing a player to place a single credit wager on a first select winning hand. The player may place another credit on the first selected winning hand

only after placing another credit on a second select winning hand. For example, if a player makes a one credit wager on obtaining a royal flush, the player must wager another credit on a second winning hand (for example, a straight) prior to placing another credit wager on the royal flush. Another restriction may include, having the maximum allowable wager on a selected winning hand being a function of the total amount wagered on all other selected winning hands.

Once the traditional wager is made, the video display 12 will display a pay table which relates the payouts (as a ratio of the amount paid per unit bet) associated with wagers placed on certain selected winning hands. The player will then wager on the certain selected winning hand or hands of his or her choice. This can be done in any desired form, including for example having a touch-sensitive region on, for example, the video display 12, or on the pay table 20 so that the player can touch the different section or sections of the pay table 20 to select the winning hand or hands on which he or she chooses to wager, as well as selecting how much to wager on each selected hand.

Software in the terminal 10 is used to recognize that wagers on select winning hands are made. Once this is done, the payout odds will be adjusted. The adjustment on the payout odds may be done in several different manners. First, the payout odds on the select winning hands may be adjusted. The adjustment on the certain select winning hands are adjusted by the software. The

adjustment on the payout for select winning hands is based on the amount wagered in the traditional manner. Thus, larger wagers in a traditional manner will increase the payout odds on the select winning hands. For example, a player makes a traditional wager of 5 credits. The player then makes a wager of 1 credit on a select winning hand. The software will then produce a payout schedule for the traditional winning hands as well as the select winning hand. If the player had made a traditional wager of 8 credits, then the software would have produce a payout schedule for the traditional winning hands as well as the select winning hand wherein the payout schedule for the select winning hand would be higher. Thus, larger wagers in a traditional manner will increase the payout odds on the select winning hands.

Alternatively, the adjustment to the payout odds may be done to the non-selected winning hands. For example, a player makes a normal traditional wager of 5 credits. The player then makes another wager of 1 credit on a select winning hand (for example a royal flush). Since the player made a wager on a select winning hand, the posted payout odds on the non-selected winning hands will be adjusted. The reason for this is that a player's strategy has a large effect on the probability of winning the selected winning hand. In the above example, if a player bets on obtaining a royal flush, the player will most likely play the optimum strategy for achieving a royal flush. As a result, the probability of the player obtaining other winning hands that were

not selected will decrease. Thus, the posted payout odds for the other winning hands that were not selected will increase to encourage the player to wager on additional hands, as well as provide the highest possible payouts.

5 While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing and other changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.